

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows: The specification has been amended to correct an obvious typographical oversight by amending the phrase "1,2-propandiol" in Table 1 on page 37 to read --- 1,3-propanediol ---.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The closest prior art as cited teaches a multitude of crosslinking agents for "superabsorbent" polymers and included among them are both of the claimed compounds ethylene glycol diglycidyl ether and 1,3 propanediol, as well as propylene glycol. The use of heat for crosslinking is also separately disclosed. The combination of ethylene glycol diglycidyl ether and 1,3 propanediol is nowhere disclosed even without the combined use of heat. The claimed process is, therefore, a very narrow selection from among a broad range of a multitude of possibilities in the prior art. The prior art most often uses propylene glycol (1,2 propane glycol) instead of the 1,3 configuration. Applicant's disclosure of improved results, as evidenced in tables 1 and 2 in the specification, show many points of improvement from the use of the claimed diol which, in combination with the stipulation in the claims of methods that result in improved conversion, overcomes the possible case of obviousness available from the closest prior art as cited. The products of the

process are also, therefore, novel and unobvious because it is, in fact, clear to one of ordinary skill in the art that the diol "cosolvent" must remain in the composition because it also is well known in the art to act as a crosslinker. Applicant's claims are, therefore, both novel and unobvious over the closest prior art as cited.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bernard Lipman whose telephone number is 571-272-1105. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-5 Mon-Fri.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Wu can be reached on 571-272-1114. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Bernard Lipman/
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1796

BL/hs